

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

Mélange?



By State Representative John J. Ryan

So we are rapidly running out of summer (and, no, I have not gotten to a Yankee game yet !) and if you were unhappy about those nasty "robo-calls", and lawn signs, and election telephone surveys, well, it is going to get much worse before it gets better ! But before we return to our regular discussion of Hartford legislative business, we have a mélange of matters to wrap up before football season kicks off!

Budget surplus news : Our daily newspapers made very little of the recent story that the budget surplus in the fiscal year that just commenced on July 1 is now projected at \$ 213 million; last year's surplus came in just north of \$940 million! It should be noted that in the state that is the last on the Tax Freedom Day calendar, our local daily newspaper editors apparently have neglected to look into and comment on which area of Connecticut generates this revenue, or that the inference may be drawn that a surplus this large might merit some tax reductions (say for example that new estate tax)?

Non "bounce" from primary: Did you note the several stories that reported that the Democrat primary winner for Governor, Mayor DeStefano, got virtually no polling "bounce" from his hard-fought and expensive primary victory? He still badly trails incumbent Governor Jodi Rell. Did you note that none of these stories thought to juxtapose that "news" with the reports of job growth in Connecticut, or the bill-signing by Rell of the latest allocation of transportation improvement funding, or the DeStefano campaign commitment to increase your taxes (see 'budget surplus news', above).

Hartford school system "progress" : Did you see the news item that began "Hartford's troubled public schools, where a superintendent once vowed that students would 'never be last again' in achievement scores, ranks last among the state's school districts in a wide range of test results released Wednesday" ? Did you recall my previous columns where we outlined which communities for many budgets in a row got by far the largest percentages of state aid? Did you notice a few days later another news story that "state charter schools prove more effective than their public, nationwide counterparts"? As I have mentioned frequently, this is not rocket science that we are talking about, so why can't some of those self-styled "political experts" increasingly being featured in our daily papers do even the most basic "connect-the-dots"?

Finally, since you will note that I do not have the highest admiration for the skills of many who cover Connecticut's Capitol news, it was very distressing to learn of the extremely untimely demise of Advocate reporter Tobin Coleman. Over the last 20 and 10 years, the Capitol press corps has steadily shrunk from dozens of writers to a mere handful. No one these days has anything close to the stature of the retired Bob Conrad, long-time dean of the Capitol media, and no one yet has filled the shoes of Cablevision News 12's Jim Murphy, who retired last year. Since some daily papers have NO reporters actually in Hartford, Tobin had been steadily increasing in experience and influence the last few years. He played no favorites, wrote objectively and with increasingly perceptive insight, and was one of the few folks who had any comprehension of the Byzantine legislative/political system. He also had a well-concealed sense of humor concerning political egos. His is a significant loss in an area of the media from which we need much more, and much better coverage. R.I.P., Tobin.

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@housegop.ct.gov or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.